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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 064225

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SUBJECT: TRAVEL WARNING - IRAQ

11. This Travel Warning updates the current security situation and reiterates the dangers of the use of civilian aircraft and of road travel within Iraq. This supersedes the Travel Warning of July 23, 2007.

12. The Department of State continues to strongly warn U.S. citizens against travel to Iraq, which remains very dangerous. Remnants of the former Baath regime, transnational terrorists, criminal elements and numerous insurgent groups remain active throughout Iraq. Multinational Force-Iraq (MNF-I) and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF)-led military operations continue, and attacks persist against MNF-I and the ISF throughout the country. Turkish government forces have carried out operations against elements of the Kongra-Gel (KKG, formerly Kurdistan Worker's Party, or Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK)) terrorist group that are located along Iraq's northern border.

13. Despite recent improvements in the security environment, Iraq remains dangerous, volatile and unpredictable. Attacks against military and civilian targets throughout Iraq continue, including in the International (or "Green") Zone. Targets include hotels, restaurants, police stations, checkpoints, foreign diplomatic missions, and international organizations and other locations with expatriate personnel. Such attacks can occur at any time. Kidnappings still occur; the most recent kidnapping of an American citizen occurred in August 2007. Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), Explosively Formed Penetrators (EFPs), and mines often are placed on roads, concealed in plastic bags, boxes, soda cans, dead animals, and in other ways to blend with the road. Grenades and explosives have been thrown into vehicles from overpasses, particularly in crowded areas. Rockets and mortars have been fired at hotels, and vehicle-borne IEDs have been used against targets

throughout the country. Occasionally, U.S. Government personnel are prohibited from traveling to certain areas depending on prevailing security conditions. In addition to terrorist and criminal attacks, sectarian violence occurs often. Detailed security information is available on the Embassy's web site at (<http://iraq.usembassy.gov>) and at (<http://www.centcom.mil>).

¶4. Military aircraft arriving and departing from Baghdad International Airport (ORBI) have been subjected to small arms and missile fire. Travelers choosing to utilize civilian aircraft to enter or depart Iraq should be aware that, although there have been no recent attacks on civilian aircraft, the potential threat still exists, as well as does the high risk to road transportation described above. Official U.S. Government (USG) personnel are strongly encouraged to use U.S. military or other USG aircraft when entering or departing Iraq. All personnel serving in Iraq under Chief of Mission (COM) authority are prohibited from entering or departing ORBI on commercial airlines unless approved by the Regional Security Office (RSO) on a case-by-case basis. Other personnel not under COM authority must be guided by their own agency.

¶5. The Embassy is located in the International Zone. The Embassy can provide only limited emergency services to U.S. citizens in Iraq. The U.S. Government considers the potential threat to U.S. Government personnel assigned to Iraq sufficiently serious to require them to live and work under strict security restrictions. At present, travel to and from the International Zone is extremely limited. Unofficial travel to Iraq by U.S. Government employees and their family members requires prior approval by the

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Department of State. The U.S. Embassy does not provide visa services to the general public. American citizens who choose to visit or reside in Iraq despite this Travel Warning are urged to take responsibility for their personal security, avoid crowds, especially rallies or demonstrations, and to inform the U.S. Embassy of their presence in Iraq. All Americans in Baghdad are strongly encouraged to register with the Embassy at the following website:

<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

¶6. American citizens may obtain the latest security information or other information about Iraq by contacting the U.S. Embassy, located in the International Zone, via landline at: 1-240-553-0589, via Iraqna cellular phones at 07901-191-0058/57/56/54/53/52/49/48, via e-mail to baghdadacs@state.gov, or by accessing the U.S. Embassy's website at (<http://iraq.usembassy.gov>). The after-hours numbers in cases of extreme emergency are Iraqna 07901-732-134 or GSM 914-822-1370.

¶7. Updated information on travel and security in Iraq may be obtained from the Department of State by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada, or for callers outside the United States, a regular toll-line at 1-202-501-4444. For further information, please consult the Country Specific Information for Iraq, as well as the Worldwide Caution, all of which are available on the Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet website at (<http://travel.state.gov/>).

¶8. Minimize considered.
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